

Reference: RM-10867

I strongly disagree with the proposed elimination of Element 1 as written. While I agree that CW is largely a traditional rite of passage to phone in the HF spectrum; I also believe that it serves as an appropriate barrier to those unwilling to take the time to study Morse code in order to gain HF privileges.

To eliminate Element 1 will open HF to abuse and interference just as amateur frequencies above 30 MHz has experienced. This is especially true in the 2-meter band. I would support the elimination of Element 1 if and only if operations on the HF bands were limited to QRP only; however, given the proposed structure of operating licensing, it would be impossible to regulate such a proposal without creating a separate license to identify those who are limited to QRP.

If the elimination of element 1 passes, it will only be a matter of time before all the HF bands become congested and the value of Amateur Radio degraded to the point of being nothing more than CB radio. If the point of removing element 1 is to encourage more participation in Amateur Radio, then I suggest that the written elements be upgraded and question pools remain guarded. It has become too easy to pass exams by memorizing answers and not understanding the material.

The point is, there needs to be a reasonable barrier to prevent riff-raff from gaining access to our cherished HF bands. A 5 WPM requirement is reasonable. Of all the exam elements, this is the one element that requires time and dedication in order to pass the examination. I wholeheartedly agree that the days of communicating with Morse-Code are gone due to vast improvements in technology. So why keep it? It's a part of Amateur Radio; it is a reasonable barrier to weed out the riff-raff who will congest and abuse our HF spectrum. Finally, the decision to remove element 1 is one which cannot be undone.

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